

everyone has a beard

All those dystopian films are coming true. There are countless ways we could all get blown to bits, and if the terminators don't get us the nanobots will, unless we all turn into nuke-spawned zombies first. Make your views known by eMailing letters@unquietdesperation.co.uk, before Kevin Costner is your postman and we're all living in villages that make the Amish look cyberpunk...

the greeks invented it, you know

Though I've picked up your little publication for a while, I'm afraid I'll be stopping now. You have some good poems and stories, but you have to spoil them by publishing filth. Do you think anyone is impressed by a story like the one by Adam Kaufman? No-one wants to read about a homosexual thinking dirty thoughts and doing things to himself. You've lost a reader, and you'll lose many more if you carry on. There has to be a stand against this sort of thing. Mary, Strabane, Northern Ireland
What? Did you read the same story as us? A lyrical portrait of a man's sense of dislocation is turned into some cock-stuffed gay porn blurb? You're right, a stand does

have to be made, but against attitudes like yours. We're not talking about your bigotry (you're probably irredeemably hate-filled) but your idiocy in misreading Adam's piece. That said, if we're bored we might get all Joe Orton and go down to your local library and slip mucky pics inside your favourite books. Now that you could complain about.

thinking is never bad

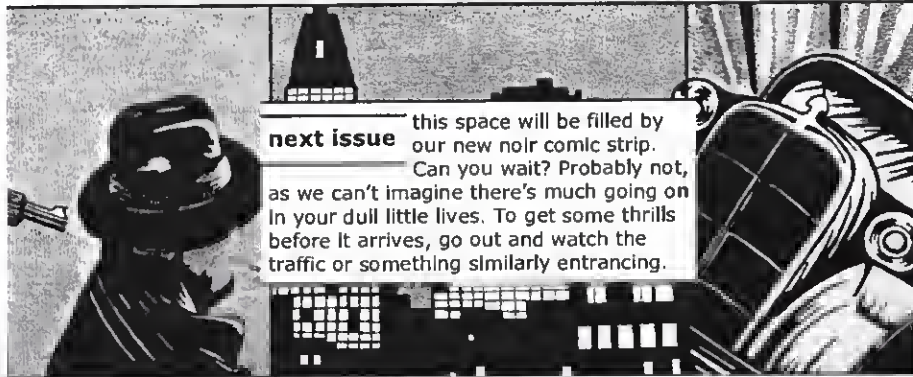
The haiku in Issue 15 are something. Haiku can be stale sometimes, but these twist it and turn it and make me think. Cool. Carl, Minot, North Dakota
A new perspective is a great thing, eh? Good news is, there are more unsettling haiku from the same author inside.

contribute!

Deadline for submissions for UD1.17 is the end of Friday 17th August. Awe us with your poetry and prose: subs@unquietdesperation.co.uk
Astound us with your artwork: art@unquietdesperation.co.uk

distribute!

You are surrounded by fools, and bemoan this. All is not lost! Get copies of UD to enlighten your town: distribution@unquietdesperation.co.uk



next issue

this space will be filled by our new noir comic strip. Can you wait? Probably not, as we can't imagine there's much going on in your dull little lives. To get some thrills before it arrives, go out and watch the traffic or something similarly entrancing.

credits etc

Editor: Mike Drabble // Co-Editor: Steven Logg // Art: Alex van der Ven, Janet Logg, Robert Fisher // Don't think we've forgotten. You can't dodge this: will you be a part of a reborn counterculture, or will you just graze like a sheep? It's time to decide...

unquiet desperation

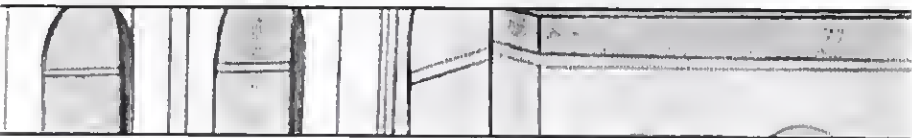


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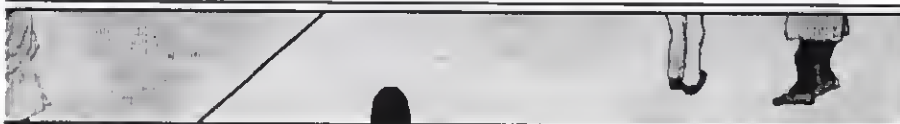
poetry, prose, views and visual art for those who know
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the counterculture is shattered. A movement that once screamed against the torpor of our time-fettered society is in shards, each fragment reflecting only the petty needs of its adherents. Whether an acolyte of one of the kaleidoscope of self-obsessed musical and literary subcultures, an obsessive over some futile political cause or worse a soul lost to those games and worlds existing only in the circuits of counting machines, we are the heirs of those with grander visions, and their shades regard us with scorn. Those dwellers of high halls that profit from our continued acceptance of the worksheep ethic are pleased: a splintered counterculture leaves them unchallenged, no voice against us squandering our days to gild their cages further. Any hint of resistance and they spew out songs from tame alternative bands, songs that speak of loneliness and shuttered rebellion. Pacification accomplished; nothing deadens like corporate nihilism. It is clear: the counterculture is broken, and it is broken because it is corrupted. Our only chance of liberty is to mend it and to do that we must look back, and heed the lessons of our wild free forebears. First the Transcendentalists of the nineteenth century and then the Beats of the fifties rejected the constraints of their times and took another, more perilous path: not only did they enter the wilderness, seeking existence away from the distractions of society, but they also sought knowledge. Their exploration was inner as well as outer. Unfortunately the Fall would come before the Beats attained enlightenment: they were swept up in the chaos of the sixties. Counterculture decayed, sliding from a flame-eyed band of literary ascetics, men and women that knew the road to true understanding was hard and long, into a hydra-headed youth movement, seeking escape and instant answers, its music already infected by the corporate world it professed to reject. If we are to forge a new counterculture we must reject this slide into factionalism, and follow the example of Thoreau and Emerson, of Ginsberg, Kerouac and Burroughs. We must reject the illusory choices our society forces on us, and strike out on our own quest to experience existence in its rawest, purest form. It will not be easy. The life of the outlaw artist, the outlaw writer disturbs loved ones and invites assault from right and left: honesty infuriates both sides of the political divide. Despite this, our first steps should not be without hope. We are forewarned that the drug-fixated and cultish short-cuts of the sixties lead only to dead ends, and know that though solitude is occasionally necessary Thoreau was never alone for too long in Walden, and even the archetypal outlaw writer, Burroughs, felt drawn to those of like mind. Indeed, this is the lesson to take from the Transcendentalists and the Beats: though comprised of individuals on their own paths to enlightenment, they came together and collaborated to telling effect on their generations and those after. We must be the same: though we draw apart from the petty lives of our peers, it will not be lonely. We will find those like us, and in the end will travel the road together. Looking beyond the shards, we see something deeper, something higher, something enduring. The spirit of creativity still smoulders in the cities and the suburbs, and our recapturing of the spirit of those glorious pioneers will set it alight. We will form the nucleus of a reborn counterculture, no longer shattered, and stand as a beacon to those seeking escape from their groundhog lives. A new movement is forming: can we afford to stand aside? Of course not. We must be at its centre, driving it with the wisdom we will gain. The knowledge we reveal will enlighten the world.



sometimes for hours in my room
and there I was able to build the world from what few pieces I was given
without any supervision
just by looking through my window at the passage of the moon
and as I rode the train to school each day I realised I wasn't wrong
the only way to see the world without raising troubling questions
was to look and let it happen
and I made friends with dogs whose barking made them hated on my block
and asked them why
and heard the answer which was
we're dogs man why not
and thought the ladybird to be far superior to me
by merit of her unique and varied beauty
and was never happier than when my knees where grazed
and flecks of blood mixed with smears of mud
and thought that risk of infection seemed unlikely
when it was the chemicals my mother used to dean me which really hurt
and I would ride the train to school
thinking it's only in these between times that I'm free
and even at an early age i was aware how much a cot looks like a prison
and saw this as step one
pretty painted bars and hanging coloured lights and the like
and moses was laid among the rushes
jesus born upon a bed of hay
and all the animals in the local petting zoo
what few there were
looked lonely and sick in their silly painted houses too
and made me feel sick and uncomfortable too and not a bit like petting
see
i preferred the foxes outlaw animals who walked the streets at night
screaming anyone come tell me I can't I dare you
and remembering I'm sure the fields beneath the tarmac
and yes i was just a lonely boy from the dusty empty suburbs
who didn't play well with others
other than a few for a while with whom I flew above the clouds
to egypt for dinner or greece to slay a mighty beast
or just onwards over spitting volcanoes to the stars
where in between the many floating lands we could be free to see the view
though we were never able to reach the sun
being bound to the earth by the laces of our shoes
laces we'd been taught to tie ourselves just moments after stepping from the cot
for our own safety (ducking mothers)
though we all knew we'd have no need for shoes
as our minds took us swimming past the moon
but how much really can a silly little lonely kid from the suburbs know
his world must surely be so small
well
about as much and clearer
as everything i think I've figured now

rob hill



journey for the heart

you
are my beauty
queen

until I think it is lost
I can't feel what
It means

I can't see Pittsburgh
the same
the map's all different

I wish you stepped in the Pacific with me
no one's to blame

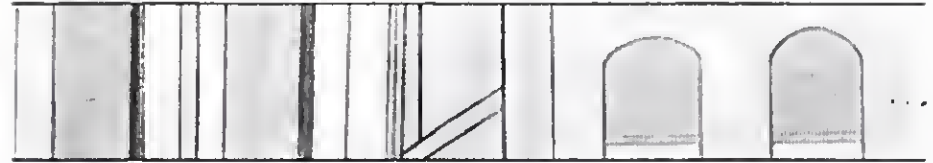
we are here
no matter where we go.

earth,
a trip
but never
blow
collecting pin pricks
everywhere we go
the price, preying...
preying
guitar twanging Tennessee
glowing, I see that, that purlieu of your pulchritude
I'm hearin shit
it's dismal
tonight though. tough
It's gone, comeback!
now I know what it's worth.
dan larkins



autobiography

I was just a boy from the suburbs
who caught the train alone to school each day
watching faces and places rush past behind the glass
and I used to stare at flowers in the schoolyard
hoping that my life might touch theirs and move them
and I never liked the smell of concrete even when wet
and I played games on my own with other lonely friends
imagining ourselves to be together
in a place where we were needed by each other
and I was just a boy from the dusty suburbs
who delighted in the smell each time I passed the butchers (now it's gone)
but hated going shopping in the violent lights of the supermarket with my mother
and I used to pray each day for evidence that I was present in god
not questioning his presence in the world
and knowing that without him the world would be too big for me
and knowing that him was not the right word
never picturing a fat old man
or even anything
and I was just a kid who at ten years old was cast out of Sunday services
for questioning the contradictions that arise
when imagination is hung upon a cross and lanced by blind soldiers
whose authority we're told must not be questioned
although it's true I never wanted to be there anyway
not seeing anything holy
in windows too coloured to let the light shine through untainted
and wondering where we thought we got the right
to do that in the first place anyway
and I was just a kid who got in trouble for my awkward questions often
but didn't mind
cos in those times I was alone alone



goodbye moon, the black sparrow sang

he has a nicer cock than you
and he fucks me three times a day,
she tells me

and I think,
well that'll give you something
to fill any lulls in conversation

six months is long enough
and thirty five years is old enough
to know enough's enough

laying down trust like train tracks
is a dangerous business;
you have to breathe in their words as
sympiotic gospel,
then turn your back

knowing that half the universe is behind you,
still

and how big
how
big
how
big
is that?

it's strange,
we said we loved each other
once
but love's as here and gone as the moon.

the telephone receiver,
down,
sits in its cradle
like an escarlot dog
and I'm at the barber's
being shaved
and feeling like a rabbit shaped jelly mould
once blancmange has been tipped out for the
party

when, out of the overcast summer,
a tall, camp and black american
walks in,
white tee shirt

white shorts

and says,
how beautiful we are, barber shaving
me being shaved

and begins to sing
soft, at first
then rising

some sad
operatic number
in english
describing
the sound of someone's voice
and how it swells his heart.

the sound is magical,
unique and ringing through the evening
and my empty, unfeeling self
until the skin on my neck
pricks geese up

and we were as right together
as we are, apart, I think
and hope her new man
and his nicer cock
can love her
for the long forever

that I can't,

and
even if
he fucks her three and thirty
times today

she'll never hear
the black
sparrow's
soaring

lament

sung by a stranger
for the green eyed girl
I loved
until

I stopped.

ed churchouse

untitled

Here, at ground zero, debris lays in rings around the blast site. Cotton garments caught on fan blades. Blankets and sheets strewn on the floor. The human scent is strong. Theodore bounds from the bed to the hall to the bath she has drawn. Frederica plucks light beams with her fencepost fingers and bends them around her form, braids them in her follicles and hums a tune. Theodore doesn't recognize the melody, but is moved by the hymn enough to chime in.

Hmm[hum]mm[hum]mmmmm
I spilt my seed in the dust
and knocked up mother earth.
I packed my bags and left town.
I wasn't there for the birth.
Deadbeat
Deadbeat.
Dead.
Beât.

Hmm[hum]mm[hum]mmmmm

justin taylor



moirae

When I was thirteen the Ouija Board declared
that I would, with the weathering
of twenty-three summers,
dissolve.

I've long since rejected Parker Brothers
and their unfalsifiable games,
but I retained that nervous belief
in my own earliness.

Not, of course, that I wanted such paucity—
nor did I ever believe
in a pre-determined span.

Rather,
I was afraid
to leave the city of my virginity

afraid of the white sun

afraid to believe
that I had time.

lauren nuckols

bad poems

sometimes my
fucking poems
get jumped
just before
they hit
home
sometimes on
their trip
from brain-vault
down arm-streets
thru final
alleyways
of fingers
they get mugged
of their
coins of clarity
then roughed up
real bad
they finally
stagger to
the door
of the page
weak
bleeding
limping on one
lame metaphor

rob plath

everybody seems to know which way is up and i can only do three things well

and the men are confident
in their Rigger boots and
hi-vis jackets adorned with company names
and in the volume of their words
they drive
knowing the way
they understand something

the dog two gardens down stalks the
perimeter
but has at least direction

I am good for little that will pay me

the world is not looking for my words
beautiful or otherwise
only poets read poems
and most of the literature that pays
is crime



what it says

In the early hours of the morning
I sat with my friend on a hard-hearted rock
and filled with beer and tobacco I said
No more eternity is left in words. I said
There's no point in writing when nobody
will read it. I said I'd rather be a rock star.
My friend said I was wrong. Then

I stumbled home to bed
woke up next morning and
filled with coffee and tobacco
sat down and wrote this poem.

My friend, what does that say?

That I smoke too much
and when I'm drunk
I say some funny things.

jared booth

all those years for this?

the secret of life
is realising
you're not
who they say you are

ben david

the great lovers you see are actors
I can sing from the gut and the balls
but nobody wants a different song

I can't fight
can't make myself heard
I know Panama hats are made in Ecuador
but can't remember which wire is live
and I hope the fuse in the PC doesn't blow
before I can drag the knowledge from
Wikipedia
and beyond knowing which end is which
I am useless with hammers
and pens don't fix much

everyday
the world turns once
and I continue
somehow
to stay
still

miles j bell

american weather

For you it is drenching hot;
here it is cold, wet.
Summer's always good for a laugh
in this disaffected isle, too dour
and pinch-faced to allow for celebration
of anything but a winter's day, thinking ourselves
reckless
we wriggle between fences to dance in the mud,
the privilege of a certain age
whilst the rest of us wait for a grudging bell
that lets us out just in time
to miss the boat.

Then there is winter but not yours, as it were
not an end in itself but a means to regret by,
the too temperate disavowance of extremes,
a refusal to engage in anything but walling a dirge
of the rain, a squall of days projected
into next summer
but not yours, that is hard and fast and will not be
ignored,
a season polarised, a crosswise hemisphere
in a leap of faith, you know this;
it is not *hiraeth* for it is not known
yet I long for it.

ceris dien

before one can summon It,
one must finally come
to the hard realization
that they are but a baby lamb
lost in the woods
and the light is falling
and the Witch is real.

jason ryberg



night thoughts

night
and I am alone on stone street
walking with slow, deliberate and calculated
steps
towards rutgers university a block away/
not another soul on the street.
with the recent change in my psychobiology
I am assuming the role of count dracula
content in my solitude
enveloped by the night
a time when I can reflect on the quality and
clarity of my own thoughts
there's something missing in this life of mine
that's probably there

that I'm seeing or haven't had a chance to see
but whatever it is
in essence it is cloaking itself very well

relative to man, I am advanced in wisdom;
relative to the Universe, I know little
man is somehow limited in his ability to
ascend mentally and spiritually

that is a source of frustration

I try to overcome myself and my limitations
through experimenting with life

what will be the final results of my efforts?
clearer but more complex thoughts, perhaps
most likely, though, an effective transcending
of the terrestrial plane...

james j nemeth



time to think

tap, tap tap, Tap, Tap, Tap, TAP, TAP, TAP... what the!? it's my jaw, tap, tapping and i never
even realised.
drip, drip, drip, drop, drip, drip... gotta get that bloody tap fixed, it's doing my head in,
christ!
grind, grind, gradgrind, grind, grind, grind, grind, grind, gradgrind, grind, grind, grind.
i'm tense.
the futility of keeping my eyes closed, desperate to tears, so i open them, heavy, i can feel
the dark grey emanate ringwise,
like two pieces of dried coconut, in negative.
gnaw, gnaw, rumble, grumble, rumble, gurgle. why does the adrenaline come when all i
need is relaxing sleep? keeping me wired

when
i'm
very
fucking
tired.

benjamin p richards

desolation

It's already dark by the time I arrive at the bus station. A harsh wind sweeps the rain into
puddles that reflect the lights suspended somewhere above, like glow worms that give the
place an ethereal, almost other-worldly feel, as if it isn't really here. I watch an old man
sit silently beneath a stopped clock beside a long abandoned café when I hear something
approaching and when I look round, it's already there. The lights go out at the same time
that the engine goes off and the bus creaks as the driver slowly climbs the stairs. He
sighs as he looks over the rubbish strewn across the floor, sits down at the front and looks
out of the window.

From up here we can see over the wall at the other end. The overgrowth of
the field beyond sways violently in the wind and the rain lashes against the window. The
driver lights a cigarette and stares out into the night, thinking back. Although it was
probably only once or twice a year, it seemed like he spent every long ago summer's day
at his grandmother's beach hut. Once, the weather had started out sunny and bright but
the closer the car got to the beach, the more overcast the day had become.
The little driver had stood transfixed by the terrifying waves that crashed in on each other
beneath a thunderous sky as his family huddled in the beach hut, some still in their
bathing suits, laughing over their sandwiches and flasks. They hadn't noticed the trance
of the little driver until they were running across the beach, their screams strangled by the
wind. The driver finishes his cigarette and stares out into the overgrowth. He can no
longer be sure, but as he became aware of his dad approaching, and the others,
screaming somewhere behind, he could have sworn that he saw someone, something out
there, calling him in...
I hear the engine, and the lights slowly flicker back on. After a few seconds, we start
moving.

ben hastie



summer people

long ago and barefoot
in the hammock I heard
some fellow say that She
was like a mosquito
because of her talent for
sucking people dry

I knew that girls didn't
buzz around with black wings
but little did I know
that I had my own embryonic
fangs translucent and dreamy
far below my platinum
braids & faded denim eyes

amanda monesson

more unrelated haiku

i don't understand
how to multiply numbers
that shit is made up.

the way i see things
is not the way others do
my eyes are broken.

when i opened up
the killer inside of me
everyone got scared.

lee harvey oswald
he did not assassinate
john f. kennedy.

fake dada



it

It stomps and hollers out for justice
at the epicenters of all our hollow promises.
It scratches, kicks and thrashes
in the tunnels beneath our bellies
to remind us we're alive.

It hangs somewhere off in the distance
of a tall-timer's thousand-yard stare
and routinely sticks a hard one
to The Secretary of The Man.

It runs up and down the stairs
in our patialal time-share of many mansions,
a pair of scissors snipity-snipping in each hand.
It gleefully swings from the trees
And sees right through all our best laid plans.

It returns the first unto the last,
turns a feast into a fast,
bonemeal into a banquet,
sticks and mud into bone, flesh and blood,
rotates the wheels on your shiny dream-car
while you sleep.

It pays the rent, pays the tab,
pays the interest (at a healthy 15% I might add).
It pays attention, pays it forward, pays it back,
and, if you're lucky (and I mean damn lucky,
like lottery lucky) It'll even play
like it gives a damn.

Yes, It rides the shoulders
of the shakers of the pillars of the earth,
the bearers of bad news
and the movers of the world's heavy loads.
It whispers hope into the ear
of the head that hangs heavy with woe.

It teaches us to speak in ancient tongues
and tongues, ticklishly, the ear that will not
hear the truth.

It revs the search engines
of the chariots of the gods,
idling at internet intersections
and high school parking lots
and then WHOOOSH, It's gone,
like a murder of crows
taking to the sky.

Power-lines and bicycle spokes
and pork-pie hats sitting on freshly made beds
are very often vital components of what It is

6



7

(as are chairs estranged in dark corners
and hula girls dancing on dashboards, as well),

Moonflowers and cirrus clouds,
broken down trains and the classic tragi-comedy
of tears falling somewhere
in a sudden summer rain,

little red wagons
and little red wheel barrows,
and busted headstones
in forgotten roadside graveyards.

And then there's the steely twang
of a pedal-steal guitar
and the squeal of cars firing off the line
under the neon mother-of-pearl moonlight
on a two-lane highway
somewhere out there this very night.

And of course love, hate and madness
are all larger parts of the sum of what It is.
You can map the face of the Earth
with the latest satellite technology,
pick your way, meticulously,
through its gravelly guts,
or sift, gingerly, through
the sedimentary layers
of lost civilizations and past lives
and still you grow only colder.

But sometimes,
when the moon is just right
and the planets are properly aligned,
It body-surfs the uncharted river of fire
that flows, simultaneously,
between the body and the soul,
the blood and plasma.

It's even been known
to suddenly flood the chasm
surrounding two random strangers
standing on a street corner
or riding the bus,
causing them to smile and nod
at each other, inexplicably,
with something close to goodwill, anyway.

Maybe there's a requisite degree
of desperation or estrangement
just to see the slow-motion, Matrix-style vapor trail
of its passing.

Or maybe,